(i) To provide one public telephone in each village by the end of 8th Five Year Plan.

(ii) Open small exchange at a place, whenever paid registered demand exceeds 10.

As on 28.02.95, above 1,70,000 villages have been provided with Telecom Services.

(d) The objectives of the 8th Five Year Plan (1992-97) of the Department of Telecommunications envisage:

— waiting period for providing telephone connections not to exceed two years in large telephone systems.

However, National Telecom Policy, 1994 envisages providing telephone connections practically on demand by 1997 all over the country including Ahmedabad and metropolitan cities.

(e) Basic Services are being opened to private sector for which tenders have been called to supplement the efforts of Department of Telecom in meeting the objectives of National Telecom Policy, 1994.

Malfunctioning of the MTNL

368. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "British system to check MTNL malfunctioning" reported in the Hindustan Times dated the 9th February, 1995;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to seek the help of the UK in checking the malfunctioning of MTNL;

(c) the details of loopholes and discrepancies found in the working of MTNL; and

(d) the other corrective measures taken to streamline the functioning of MTNL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) MTNL is a big organisation whose network has crossed 2 million telephone lines mark recently and is growing at around 20 per cent. annum. For maintenance of cable records in such a large system and periodical monitoring their health, automatic processes through computer controlled systems are necessary. A pilot project with the help of Telecom. Engineering Centre has been proposed to improve the reliability of cable data and record keeping. Various other measures taken to improve the services by MTNL are given in Statement.

Statement

Steps taken to improve services in MTNL

Several measures have been taken towards betterment of services by improving reliability as well as by improving customer inferface. These are as under:

1. *TELEPHONE EXCHANGE AND MEDIA:*

(a) Introduction of Electronic Exchanges.

(b) Introduction of Electronic Taxs.

(c) Introduction of Electronic Transit Exchanges.

(d) Phasing out of old and life expired electro mechanical exchanges.

(e) Introduction of optical fibre and digital cicrowave system for interexchange junctions.

2. *EXTERNAL PLANT:*

(a) Laying of under ground cables induets.

(b) Pressurisation of paper core under-ground cables.

(c) Use of jelly filled PVC insulated under-ground cables.

(d) Use of improved termination devices employing insulation displacement technique. It pron

(e) Replacement of oil fault prone cables.

(f) Use of insulated dropwire with proper accessories.

(g) Reduction of overhead open in local loop.

3. *COMPUTERISATION OF THE FOLLOWING HAS BEEN TAKEN UP*

(a) Fault Repair Service.

(b) Comprehensive Financial Management System including commercial and billing activities.

4. *OPENING OF ADDITIONAL COMPUTERISED COSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES/QUICK COSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES.*

5. *INCREASED ACCESS TELEPHONES BY OPENING:*

(a) Additional Public Telephones local and STD calls.

(b) Telecom centres.

6. *IMPROVED CUSTOMER INTERFACE*

(a) Conduction of telephone adalats.

(b) Conduction of Open House Sessions.

(c) Decentralization of several commercial activities to Divisional Customer Service Centres.

(d) Easy accessibility of field officers to general public.

Foreign Technology in the Communication Network

369. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is a public apprehension over the plethora of foreign technologies that would be inducted in the existing communication network;

(b) whether Government are also aware of the feeling of the DOT officials that the new systems had been hurriedly picked up, without considering that they could pose major installation problems; and

(c) if so, what steps Government intend to take to cope up with such a serious situation to occur?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No written communication in this regard has been received. However, no installation problem is envisaged.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

Improvement of Telephone Services

370. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ther is a need to improve telephone services in the country in general and in Orissa in particular;

(b) if so, the steps taken to identify the areas where improvement is very urgently required; and

(c) the details of steps taken to implement the plan drawn up for improvement of telephone services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) Improvment of telephone services is a continuous process. Various measures are regularly taken by department for improving the quality of services as detailed below:—

(i) Modernisation of the Switching network.

(ii) Computerisation of vraious services.

(iii) Upgradation of external plant